

Speaking Effectively
Professor Anjali Gera Roy
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur
Lecture 31
How to Contribute Effectively to a Meeting

In this unit of module 7 we move onto, how to contribute to meetings? In the last session we looked at how to lead meetings and we decided, we agreed that at this stage probably you will be participating in meetings rather than leading meetings. So let's look at how can one contribute effectively to a meeting. The reason why we resent going meeting is we feel oh what's in it for me, how is it going to make a difference to me, or how I am going to make a difference.

Also some of us do not like, we feel that we have nothing to contribute, some of us feel that once a master going to contribute, I will dry up, I do not know what to say. So let's look at how can one make productive important contributions to a meeting by participating in an effective manner. There are four parts of there are four ways in which you can contribute, four parts to it. Let's look at these 4 parts.

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Four Aspects of Making a Contribution

- Introducing and presenting our ideas clearly and concisely
- Appreciating and building upon others' perspectives and ideas
- Being influential and dealing effectively with conflict
- Maintaining and building our confidence in our ability and right to contribute


One is introducing and presenting our ideas clearly and concisely. This is the first part and I am going to show you in separate module how would you present your ideas very clearly and concisely? The second part is appreciating and building upon others perspective and ideas. This

is the second part. In the third part the third aspect is being influential and dealing effectively with conflict and finally maintaining and building our confidence in our ability and right to contribute. So let's begin from the beginning.

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Introducing and presenting our ideas clearly and concisely

- Use the PIR technique
- Use the 3 Ts
- Use the Association Principle
- Pay attention to what you say last – make your endings



Introducing and presenting our ideas clearly and concisely. How does one do this? You can do this by using the PIR techniques. What is the PIR technique? The PIR technique refers to first of all when you are asked when you try to talk to people you will find the most people are preoccupied with something. They are either chatting with each other or looking at their phones or thinking about something else. So first thing is to get them stop them by being preoccupied.

The second is to use so one way of braking people or getting their attention is to greet them whether you are leading a meeting or you are contributing the meeting ask them, address them and say you are going to start the meeting or you have something important to say and then follow it up with an ice breaker. An icebreaker which will help to break the ice with the others, suppose you have just started you can say something casual, something informal to establish a relationship with people.

And the third is introduce something, tell them something to show how what you are saying is relevant to them. This is the PIR technique. The second is use the 3 T's. What are the 3 T's? Tell people what you are going to tell, them tell them and tell them what you told them. Remember

people's attention spans are very small. So, if you have told them something it is (hav) likely that they have forgotten what you said within a few minute of what you said to them. So, there is no harm in repeating what you said.

Tell them what you are going to say, and tell them what you have said. this is the 3T formula. Use the association principal. What do we mean by association principle? Whenever you are explaining something to somebody or introducing an idea unless people are able to relate to what you are saying they are not going to understand or they are not going to pay any attention to them. So suppose you are going to talk to them about increasing security on your in your organization.

So suppose you were refer to a personal example of someone who was robbed or who had his room or office broken or his house broken in, if you relate it to them by using association people are more likely to pay attention to you. Pay attention to what you say last, make your endings. So when you conclude make it something that people will remember, make it something memorable so that they will remember what you said. So introducing and presenting your ideas clearly and concisely. The second part is what is the inappropriate behavior?

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Inappropriate Behaviour

- Excluding — deliberately ignoring some group members, either because they do not like them or they are not interested in what those people have to say
- Belittling — not giving respect to other people's contributions
- Blocking — constantly raising objections and bringing up the same issue after the group has considered or rejected it, thus delaying progress towards the goal

This is when you (ex) deliberately ignore some group members either because you do not like them or because you are not interested in what these people have to say. The second is to (betil)

belittling not giving respect to others people contributions and blocking which is constantly raising objections and (bring) bringing up the same issues after the group had considered or rejected it, thus delay in progress towards the goal. So these are all parts of the second aspect of contributing that is appreciating and building on other perspective and ideas.

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Appreciating and building upon others' perspectives and ideas

- Use the LASER technique.
 - listen
 - acknowledge
 - summarising
 - exploring
 - review
- Use building phrases
 - I like what you have said, in addition we could.....
 - Building on your good start we could.....
 - Something that could complement your interesting idea is.....
 - That is a good point you make, I think we could explore it more by.....
 - Your idea is very helpful, one specific aspect o we could develop is.....
 - Your idea is very promising, something that could make it a reality is.....
 - That is a very imaginative idea of yours, I think a way to implement it could be.....



Remember what's the idea of the meeting it is not just to express your ideas, it is just not to share others idea but also to know what the rest of the people have to say on something understand their mind set, understand their attitude, understand how they feel about it and so this quality appreciating and building on others perspective and ideas in order to be able to contribute effectively yourself is very important. So what are the ways you can do this by one is one important way through which you can do this is using the laser technique. What is a laser technique?

Listen to people careful, appreciate acknowledge what they have said, do not belittle, do not do not dismiss what they have to say, acknowledge what they have said, summarize what others have said . In order to understand what they have said if you summarize what they have said you will understand their mindset properly. you also need to explore and finally to review. Now you can use building phrases in order to understand others perspective or to build on. So suppose someone has made a very interesting or very cogent or very important point before you.

But, you have something to add to it or you have something to you have to disagree with the person so you could use phrases building phrases of this kind, I agree, I like what you said in addition we could, Building on your good start, So this is how you can come in. Building on your good start we could, something that could compliment your interesting idea is, That is a good point you make or you made, I think we could explore it by you could also say your idea is very helpful, One specific aspect of we could develop is.

Your idea is very promising, something that could make it a reality. This is one way people think ok they we are on the same plane they think ok you are acknowledging their contribution they feel that you are not against them they feel that they have made something (mee) they have also made meaningful contribution. So that's a very imaginative idea of yours I think and good way to implementing it could be. So this is the way you can use building phrases to appreciate and build on others perspective and ideas.

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Appreciating and building upon others' perspectives and ideas

Identify the other person's mindset

- People that think very big picture, they say things like: "What is the overall message here?" or "The general direction we need to go in is..."
- People that like detail, they say things like: "What are the precise causes of this problem?" or "What specific evidence is there to support this particular view?"
- People that personally identify with issues, they say things like: "I have a problem" or "I cannot see my way out of this."
- People that keep things at arm's length, they say things like: "There seems to be a problem there" or "How can a way be found out of that situation?"
- People that look to future goals and challenges, they say things like: "Our vision and goals for the future are..." or "Over the next five years we need to become recognised experts in this particular area of the market."
- People that look to avoid mistakes and crisis situations, they say things like: "We need to make sure this does not happen again" or "We need to get round these upcoming obstacles."
- People that act on their own internal values, they say things like: "That is not the way I feel things should be done" or "That sits easily with me" or "I didn't get where I am today by..."
- People that like to check out the world of things by gaining feedback from other people, they say things like: "What does the boss/team think?" or "Have you checked this out with so and so to get their views?"
- People that like to identify and play around with options and ideas, they say things like: "Let's stick around a few ideas" or "What would happen if we thought outside the box and widened our thinking?"
- People that like to narrow things down and think in terms of specific processes and methods, they say things like: "What steps are we going to take to make this happen?" or "What does the flowchart of this process look like?" or "Talk me through this stage by stage."
- People that like to look for similarities, they say things like: "We did something like this before" or "This issue reminds me of..."
- People that like to look for difference, they say things like: "I have not come across this aspect before" or "The one thing that stands out for me as not fitting in here is..."



Another way of appreciating and building on others (pers) perspective and ideas is to identify the other person mind set. Now when if we are listening to other people we need to understand where they are coming from, what is their mind set in order to appreciate what they are saying we also need to know what where they come from what attitude do they bring to the meeting. So we have different kinds of people and you have to decide, what is the mindset of this person? So that you can appreciate and build on what they are saying.

So there are people who think of a very big picture, there are people who like detail, people who personally identify issues, people who keep things at arm's length, people that look to future goals and challenges, those who (like) look to avoiding mistakes and crisis situations, people that can act that act on their own internal values, people that like to check out the worth of things by gaining feedback from the people, people that like to identify and play around with options and ideas, people that like to narrow things down and think in terms of specific processes and methods.

So there are also people that (1a) like to look for similarities. Then there is the last group of people who like to look for differences. So first you decide what is the person's mind saying, so that you can build on that perspective and add to it. So suppose somewhere there is a person who has thought of a big picture they are people who say what's the (overall) overall message here or somebody who likes to identify with issues they say I have a problem.

I cannot see my way out of it, or there are others who try keep warning you by saying we like we need to make sure this does not happen again or we need to get around these upcoming obstacles or people who like to look at a specific process ok they say what steps are we going to take to make this happen, what does a flow chart of this process look like, people who look for similarities. So you need to identify the mindset of different kinds of people.

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Identify the other person's mindset Do your best to listen empathetically

- As well as showing that you are listening to somebody through what you say and do, practise the skill of creating a rich picture in your mind of what the other person is saying and what it means to them. Immerse yourself in their words, thoughts and imagery and stop thinking about your own agenda and what you might want to say in response.
- If you do this your inner concentration on what is being said will shine through to your outer behaviour, and those attending the meeting will see you as an excellent listener. This will encourage people to talk to you, so making it easier for you to identify the differing views around the table. Also, when the time comes for you to make your own contributions, people will be more than happy to listen to you, just as you listened to them.



Identify the other person's mindset and do your best to listen empathetically. In order to understand the other person's mind set the best way of doing it the best way of appreciating other people's idea is empathetic listening. What is empathetic listening? empathetic listening comes from empathy. What is empathy? Empathy sounds like sympathy but it is not sympathy because sympathy means feelings you know feeling concern for someone.

But empathy is different it means you put yourself in the place of the other person and try to think by putting yourself in their shoes, by understanding their way of thinking. Only then you are able to understand what the problem with something is. So (inss) in addition to listening to people you must also say immerse yourself in their words thoughts and imaginary and stop thinking about your own agenda and what you might want to say in response.

If you do this your inner concentration on what is being said will shine through to your outer behavior and those attending the meeting will see you as an excellent listener. This will encourage people to talk to you. So making it easier for you to identify the different views around the table. Also when the times comes for you to make your own (inte) contributions people will power be happy to listen to you because you listened to them.

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Being influential and dealing effectively with conflict

- Remember that there are only two types of conflict, hot and cold, and that each needs to be addressed differently.
- Hot conflict is passionate and fiery. It happens when people care deeply about the topic under discussion.
- Cold conflict is detached and icy. It happens when people become cynical and disillusioned



The other part of it is now the third part. We come to the third part of how one can contribute effectively to a meeting. In the third part we look at how can be one be influential and deal effectively with conflict. As I said earlier real meetings are not ideal situations, real meetings are places (whe) are shows of power, which are ego, which are are demonstrations of domination and control and authority and rivalry and jealousy and competition and so on. And also conflict.

Now conflict should not be regarded as something unhealthy because not recognizing conflict is more unhealthy because it could be unnatural if there would be no conflict between a group of people. A group of people are bound to have conflicts with one another and the way of dealing conflict is not to deny the presence of conflict and pretend that everything is ok. The way of dealing with conflict is to the way of recognizing conflict and dealing with conflict is to find a way of getting people who are conflicting or to resolve conflicts.

So there are two kinds of conflict. One kind of conflict is a hot conflict. Now hot conflict is a passionate and fiery conflict. It happens when people care deeply about the topic under discussion and often you will find people screaming at one another people do not come to sophisticate out but they do screen on one another and they shout at each other, they say unpleasant things to one another and the discussion of the meeting get very unpleasant and very fiery.

But there is another kind of (con) conflict which is cold conflict and cold (con) conflict and cold conflict in my mind is even more dangerous than hot conflict because cold conflict is detached and icy. People do not even though they are in a position of conflict with one another they do not state it openly they do not they remain very civil they are very cold and icy. And it happens when this is more dangerous kind of a conflict because this is when people become cynical and icy. So what are the things you can do to deal effectively with conflicts?

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Being influential and dealing effectively with conflict

- Use the six stages of 'Verbal Judo' when managing conflict situations:
- Ask for people's co-operation
- Explain why you need their co-operation and give the background and context of the situation
- Acknowledge people's reactions and summarise their positions (the LASER technique mentioned above can be used during this stage)
- Outline the options for addressing the situation (describe the most favoured options first, then the least favoured and then finish by summarising the most favoured options again)
- Confirm the current situation. What agreements can be made about the way forward? What disagreements/problem areas remain?
- Act on agreements and address the problem areas



Let's look at those. Use the six stages of 'Verbal Judo' when managing conflict situations. Ask for, first of all, ask for people's (collective) co-operation. There is nothing more disarming (in) than a person asking seeking for people's co-operation because remember people are meeting to resolve differences. People are coming together as a group in order to co-operate with one another, not to fight with one another. So begin by seeking their co-operation. Explain why we need to get their co-operation. Show them the objectives, tell them the background and the contexts of the situation and tell them why they need to co-operate in order to come to a resolution.

Acknowledge people's reactions and summarize their position, as we discussed the laser technique, it can be used. Do not wish away or do not dismiss people's reactions. Remember, if someone is feeling angry or someone is in conflict with one another, there is definitely a reason for that. And if you say well this people are just disagreeing with one another and they are unreasonable people, that does not help. Instead of that you must try to recognize why are they feeling the way they are feeling? What are their reactions? So listen to their reactions. Try to understand what is creating the conflict situations. Acknowledge their reactions and try to summarize why they are saying what they are saying.

Outline the options for addressing the situation. So if there is a conflict situation, you can describe the most favored options first, then the least favored and then finish by summarizing the most favored options again. So this way even if people have a conflict and if you tell them that

look one has to choose between one of the various options available to them, then people are more likely to find a way of resolving their conflict.

Confirm the current situation. What agreement can be made about the way forward? What disagreement? So there are meetings never end to everyone's optimum satisfaction. They are always some, there is always some disquiet left. So if there are some disagreements or problems, you must be aware of those problems. What agreements can be made? And finally act on agreements and address the problem areas. So this was a way of being influential and dealing effectively with conflicts.

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Maintaining and building our confidence in our ability to contribute

- **Look for your own personal, unique selling point.** What is the one characteristic, item of expertise, personal experience or resource you possess that will encourage others to buy into your presence at the meeting and listen to your contributions? You may possess status, access to funds or specialist knowledge and expertise that is of great value to those present at the meeting. If you have a clear idea of your own worth to the meeting this will help you feel more confident and encourage you to be more forthright when making contributions.



Now we come to the final part, which is maintaining and building our confidence in our ability to contribute. Now you have to ask yourself, what kind of person are you? Are you the kind of person who dominates a meeting? Are you the kind of person who does not speak at a meeting at all? Who remain silent and I'll also introduce you to the various kind of roles (par) that you can adopt in any given meeting depending on your temperament. rather adopting the roles these are the roles we find ourselves taking in a meeting.

You need to find out what is the role that you take in a meeting? So this is a more important to people who do not have the confidence to speak out at a meeting because they feel that they have nothing to contribute. And I often find this happening in meetings I have attended that, the more junior colleagues in the meeting, even if they have something very meaningful to contribute, they always thinking about the pros and cons of saying. They are very cautious in using words because they are afraid of creating an unfavorable impression.

So they choose the option of not saying anything at all and even when they are asked to contribute they are very guarded. They say things very carefully and they usually sit on the friends. They try to sense what the mood of the entire group is? Which way the wind is blowing? And they trying to align themselves with the more strong group because they are afraid. so, yes you might by aligning yourself with a strong group, you might find favors with that group or you might get into the good books of that group.

But you are losing an opportunity of contributing or putting forward your real thoughts and ideas. It is possible that you had something more interesting to contribute or more meaningful to contribute than those who had their say, but prevented or refrained from doing so because of your reticence. So first thing that you need to find out and this is something you can do even before you attend the meeting.

Because when you will look at the agenda items you know, what is the agenda? What is going to be discussed? And what is the role you can play there? How can you contribute to a particular item on the agenda or on all the items on the agenda? How do you do this?

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Maintaining and building our confidence in our ability to contribute

- **Look for your own personal, unique selling point.** What is the one characteristic, item of expertise, personal experience or resource you possess that will encourage others to buy into your presence at the meeting and listen to your contributions? You may possess status, access to funds or specialist knowledge and expertise that is of great value to those present at the meeting. If you have a clear idea of your own worth to the meeting this will help you feel more confident and encourage you to be more forthright when making contributions.



So first of all you must look at, if you are one of those people who feels that, how can I say anything at a meeting and remain tongue tied at a meeting. You have to find your unique selling point. Maybe you are the youngest, but maybe you have some special talents which no one in the group has. Maybe you are the expert in that area.

So what is that one characteristic item of expertise or personal experience or resource that you possess, that will encourage others to buy into your presence at the meeting and listen to your contributions. So you may possess status, access to funds, specialist knowledge and expertise that is of great value to those present at the meeting. If you have a, so you must know what are your strengths. If you have a clear idea about your strength, your worth to the meeting, that will help

you to make more confident and encourage you to become more forthright when making your contributions.

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Maintaining and building our confidence in our ability to contribute

- Methodically and specifically dispute negative beliefs and assumptions. Ask yourself the following questions: What specific evidence can you find to dispute the negative beliefs troubling you? Rather than blaming yourself, what other reasons could there be for the situations causing your negative beliefs? What are the real implications of the situations you are thinking about negatively? What is the ultimate usefulness of the negative beliefs you hold and what positive things could you start thinking or doing in order to replace them?
- Specify and reaffirm your right to attend the meeting and make your contribution. Be clear in your own mind about your right to attend the meeting. It may be as a result of your unique selling point as described above, or it may be because you are representing your team, colleagues or some other part of the organisation. You may find it useful to write out the rights you feel you have. Before attending each meeting, remind yourself of your specific right to be there.



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The second thing you need to know when you are maintaining and building your confidence in your ability to contribute is, (methodo) (meth) methodically and specifically disputing negative beliefs and assumption. So this comes from a very poor self-image or thinking of the consequences. Many of us are diffident because we do not want to take responsibilities. We are afraid of the consequences of what we say and what we do. How would it be interpreted and.

So what you need to do is, what specific evidence can you find to dispute the negative beliefs troubling you? Rather than blaming yourself what are the reasons could there be for situations causing your negative beliefs? What are the real implications of the situation you are talking about, thinking about negatively? What's the ultimate usefulness of negative beliefs you hold and what positive things could you start thinking or doing in order to replace them? Say you had an experience at a meeting and you suggested something and your idea was rudely rejected.

So it is possible that you think, 'okay, I made this suggestions at the last meeting and no one really heard me out.' Whatever the reason might be. So this time you are very cautious. You keep your mouth shut because you feel that this time again no one would be willing to listen to you. But it is possible that the last time when your idea was turned down, maybe the idea was not

good enough, maybe the person who turned it down was negative kind of person. It could also be that the climate in which it was presented, the situation has changed.

So do not worry about negativity beliefs. Third thing you can do is to specify and reaffirm your right to attend the meeting and make your contribution. So now many of us, I myself I might be doing it, that we feel that, why should I attend the meeting? I have nothing to contribute to it. you know, the meeting is about issues or topics in which I have no say in the matter or I have no expertise. So what could I possibly do if I go to the meeting?

Now if you are clear, if you can think by reading the agenda carefully and you are clear, then this, maybe I am not an expert in this area, but this is an area where I am an expert in and maybe this is an area in which I can make a valuable contribution. So if you are asked to come to a meeting, if you have be clear in your mind up on you are right to attend your meeting. It may be as a result of you unique selling point or it may be because you are representing your team, colleagues or some other part of the organization.

You may find it useful to write down the rights you feel you have. Before attending each meeting, remind yourself of your specific right to be there. What are the other ways in which you can maintain and build your confidence and your ability to contribute?

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Maintaining and building our confidence in our ability to contribute

- **Set yourself positive rather than negative goals.** Think about the positive things you want to achieve during a meeting and then think about how best you can achieve them. Resist the temptation to set negative goals such as 'I must avoid being ignored' or 'I must not show irritation or anger'. Negative goals merely serve to draw your attention to the very things you are trying to avoid. Concentrate instead on visualising the positive things that you want to achieve, make these more helpful things bright and clear in your mind.



So think positive. Most of us who are hesitant to make contributions, we are negative in our outlook. And I include myself in that group. Very often I find myself getting into a negative more and thinking, 'No, I do not really need to do this.' And I find people who make valuable contributions or who people like listening to, are the ones who are always positive, who always set themselves positive goals rather than negative goals. So think about the positive things you want to achieve during a meeting.

Then think about how you can achieve them. So instead of thinking negatively say, 'okay I do not want to be ignored or I must not get angry.' You can start by thinking by what would I do and what are the goals I achieved. Negative goals merely serve to draw your attention to the very things you are trying to avoid. So instead concentrate on visualizing the positive things that you want to achieve, make these more helpful things bright and clear in your mind.

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Maintaining and building our confidence in our ability to contribute

- **Assume the positive intent of those attending the meeting.** Making positive assumptions about the motives and likely reactions of the other people at the meeting will make you feel less defensive. As a result you will deliver your contributions with greater confidence and credibility. Remember that even if there are some difficult, non-supportive people at the meeting they are likely to be in the minority and be positively influenced by the rest of the people surrounding them.
- **Remember how well you did before you do it.** Put yourself into the future and visualise yourself having already attended your next meeting. You did very well. You came across confidently and made your points very effectively. You were listened to and you gained agreement. Now think of all the steps that you went through to make this success happen. Start with the pre-meeting preparation and then think about your contributions during the meeting. What specifically did you do at each stage to ensure this overall success? Now create an action plan for your next meeting based on your thoughts. This technique works because it encourages you to think about the positive things that could happen in the future and the ways you can make them happen, rather than about the negative things that could hinder your effectiveness.



And finally what you can do is, assume the positive intent of those attending the meeting. Now this happens to people who are sceptics. Who always feel who have no trust in the people who are attending the meeting. So they always feel that people who are coming to the meeting, and mind you, this is not untrue all together. You find yourself attending meetings many a times where people have a very specific agenda, they have hidden agendas.

I myself attended meetings where the meeting is just there to rectify your decision which is already being taken. And you feel that people are just going through the motions and the decision has already been made. So it is not untrue, but going to every meeting thinking that those who are (atten) (un) attending the meeting do not have a positive intent, is adopting a very negative attitude. So make positive assumptions about the motives and the likely reactions of other people at the meeting. If you do that it will make you less defensive.

As a result, you will deliver your contributions with a greater confidence and credibility. Remember that even if there are some difficult non supportive people and the meeting there is likely to be minority and be positively influenced by the rest of the people surrounding them. And finally what you could do this that I am sure there are meetings in which you made your valuable contribution, where your ideas were appreciated and you could think of those meetings where you made an impact and put yourself into the future and visualize yourself having attended your next meeting.

You did very well, you came across confidently and made your points very effectively, you were listened to, and you gained agreement. Now think of all the steps that you went through to make this success happen. Start with the pre meeting preparation and think about your contributions to the meeting. What specifically did you do at each stage to ensure this overall success? Now create an action plan for your next meeting based on your thoughts.

This technique works because it encourages you to think about the positive things that could happen in the future and the way you can make them happen, rather than think about negative things that hinders your effectiveness. So in this unit we looked at four different aspects of contributing to a (me) meeting. One is introducing your ideas. Second is to, let's come back and revisit those four goals. One is introducing the PR sorry introducing and presenting your ideas clearly and concisely.

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Four Aspects of Making a Contribution

- Introducing and presenting our ideas clearly and concisely
- Appreciating and building upon others' perspectives and ideas
- Being influential and dealing effectively with conflict
- Maintaining and building our confidence in our ability and right to contribute



Appreciating and building upon others perspectives and ideas. Third was being influential and dealing effectively with conflict and finally, maintaining and building confidence in our ability and right to contribute. So with this, I conclude this unit and we will move onto, how do you present your ideas and make an impact in a meeting very clearly and concisely?